

Monday, November 17, 2003

Florida Municipal Electric Association and City of Leesburg Urge Consumers to Prevent Holiday Hazards

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (November 17, 2003) – What is typically known as the most joyous season of the year can also be one of the most hazardous. Around the country, millions of people will soon begin decorating for the holidays, but unfortunately, many will unknowingly create many electrical hazards in and around the home.

Each year thousands of fires start as the result of overloaded outlets, faulty or worn electrical wires and decorations used improperly. As part of an effort to reduce holiday accidents and to keep the holidays merry, the Florida Municipal Electric Association (FMEA) and the City of Leesburg have compiled the following simple tips for holiday electrical safety:

*** * Ten Tips for Holiday Electrical Safety * * ***

1. Never use nails or staples to secure light strings or electrical cords.
2. Do not overload extension cords and electrical outlets or connect more than three light strings together.
3. Inspect decorations before plugging them in, checking for frayed or loose wires and loose connections.
4. Turn off holiday lights while you are away from home or before going to bed at night. Consider adding a programmable timer to ensure lights are not accidentally left on.
5. Unplug strings of lights before replacing bulbs, and replace burned-out bulbs promptly with ones of the same wattage.
6. When placing lights or decorations outdoors, use only decorations and extension cords certified for outdoor use.
7. Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to avoid potential shocks.
8. Do not string lights on trees that are near or touching power lines.
9. On outside lights, point sockets down to avoid moisture build-up, wrap a plastic bag around connections and tie ends with electrical tape.
10. Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. Faulty bulbs could make the tree become charged with electricity.

For more information about holiday electrical safety, visit FMEA's Web site at www.publicpower.com. Additional information is available from the Electrical Safety Foundation International (www.esfi.org).

The Florida Municipal Electric Association (FMEA) represents the unified interests of 32 public power communities across the state, which provide electricity to more than two million of Florida's residential and business consumers.

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